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Message Text

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ACTION PM-03

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SS-15 NSC-05 SP-02 PA-01 PRS-01

USIA-06 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 RSC-01 L-02 /056 W
---------- 122620
P 101826Z JAN 75
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5768
INFO USCINCEUR PRIORITY
CNO WASHDC PRIORITY
CINCUSNAVEUR PRIORITY
COMSIXTHFLT PRIORITY
AMCONSUL MARSEILLE
DIA WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 00822

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, MPOL, FR
SUBJECT: US MARINE TRAINING IN FRANCE

REF: USDAO FRANCE 695 (091839Z JAN 75)

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: TRAINING OF U.S. MILITARY FORCES ON FRENCH TERRITORY IS POLITICALLY SENSITIVE SUBJECT TO GOF. IN PAST, THIS SENSITIVITY HAS LED TO LOSS OF USE BY U.S. OF SOME TRAINING IN FRANCE. GIVEN FRENCH DOMESTIC POLITICAL ASPECTS OF THIS SUBJECT, GOF WOULD PREFER TO BE SINGLE POINT OF CONTACT FOR HANDLING PRESS INQUIRIES ON U.S. TRAINING IN FRANCE. EMBASSY HAS ACCEPTED GOF PREFERENCE, AND RECOMMENDS THAT ALL U.S. REPRESENTATIVES BE GUIDED BY SAME APPROACH. END SUMMARY.

2. REFTEL DESCRIBED GROWING MEDIA COVERAGE AND PRESS INTEREST IN U.S. MARINE TRAINING EXERCISE AT CAMP CANJEURS, LOCATED IN THE SOUTH OF FRANCE NEAR DRAGUIGNAN, TAKING PLACE JANUARY 10-20, 1975. IT MAY BE HELPFUL TO DEPARTMENT AND INFO ADDEES TO HAVE MORE COMPLETE PICTURE
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OF DEVELOPMENTS SURROUNDING THIS SUBJECT AND PRESS POLICY

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ADOPTED BY GOF AND EMBASSY.

3. U.S. MARINES ATTACHED TO SIXTH FLEET TRAINED AT CANJUERS IN JANUARY 1974. THIS TRAINING EXERCISE ATTRACTED SOME HOSTILE FRENCH PRESS COVERAGE. WE UNDERSTAND THAT GOF PERMISSION FOR JANUARY 1974 MARINE TRAINING AT CANJUERS HAD NOT BEEN COORDINATED WITH THE THEN PRIME MINISTER MESSMER. MOREOVER, WE WERE TOLD THAT WHEN HE LEARNED OF THE TRAINING THROUGH HOSTILE PRESS REPORTS, HE DIRECTED THAT FURTHER MARINE USE OF CAMP CANJUERS FOR 1974 NOT BE APPROVED BY GOF. WHILE SOME OBSERVERS THOUGHT AT THE TIME THAT MESSMER'S ACTION WAS MOTIVATED BY FRANCO-AMERICAN IRRITATIONS STEMMING FROM EVENTS OF LATE 1973, WE ARE PURSUADED THAT MESSMER'S ACTION WAS PROBABLY A REFLECTION OF HIS EMBARRASSMENT AT BEING CONFRONTED SUDDENLY BY POLITICALLY SENSITIVE DEVELOPMENT ABOUT WHICH HE KNEW NOTHING BEFOREHAND.

4. EMBASSY WAS PLEASED WHEN NEW FRENCH GOVERNMENT APPROVED SUBSEQUENT REQUEST BY US FOR JANUARY 1975 MARINE TRAINING AT CANJUERS. WHILE OUR ORIGINAL REQUEST HAD ENVISIONED TRAINING INVOLVING A SIXTH FLEET BATTALION SIZE FORCE (APPROXIMATELY 800 MARINES), FRENCH WOULD APPROVE TRAINING INVOLVING ONLY 200 MARINES. GIVEN POLITICAL SENSITIVITIES THAT U.S. USE OF CANJUERS HAS AROUSED IN PAST, WE DID NOT APPEAL GOF LIMITATION ON SIZE OF TRAINING.

5. IN LIGHT OF GROWING MEDIA COVERAGE AND PRESS INTEREST IN JANUARY 1975 MARINE TRAINING AT CANJUERS, MADE MORE TOPICAL BY MISINTERPRETATIONS OF SECRETARY KISSINGER'S

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INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SS-15 NSC-05 SP-02 PA-01 PRS-01

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5769
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DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
DOD WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 PARIS 00822

"BUSINESS WEEK" INTERVIEW AND BY 30-MINUTE FRENCH TV DOCUMENTARY (BROADCAST JANUARY 9) WHICH STRESSED SIXTH FLEET READINESS FOR ANY CONTINGENCY OPERATION (E.G., MIDDLE EAST INVOLVEMENT), EMBASSY HAS ADOPTED A LOW PROFILE IN RESPONDING TO PRESS QUERIES CONCERNING U.S. TRAINING ON FRENCH TERRITORY. FRENCH FOREIGN MINISTRY HAS TOLD US THAT THEY WOULD PREFER TO HAVE ALL PRESS INQUIRIES REFERRED TO GOF FOR RESPONSE. GIVEN DOMESTIC POLITICAL ASPECTS THAT SURROUND ENTIRE QUESTION OF U.S. TRAINING ON FRENCH TERRITORY, WE AGREE THAT GOF IS APPROPRIATE SPOKESMAN ON THIS MATTER, AND WE HAVE REFERRED ALL INQUIRIES TO GOF.

6. THE QUAI HAS TOLD US THAT IT HAS DEVELOPED FOLLOWING PRESS GUIDANCE FOR USE BY QUAI AND MOD SPOKESMEN IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS ON THIS SUBJECT:

-- TRAINING OF U.S. MARINES AT CANJUERS IS ROUTINE EVENT, LIKE MANY OTHER TRAINING EXERCISES BY OTHER ALLIES ON FRENCH TERRITORY. THIS IS NATURAL CONFIDENTIAL

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DEVELOPMENT AMONG ALLIES.

-- THERE IS NO SPECIAL CONCENTRATION OF SIXTH FLEET SHIPS NEAR FRANCE'S SOUTHERN COAST.

-- (SHOULD QUESTION OF SIXTH FLEET NUCLEAR CAPABILITIES BE RAISED) THE GOF DOES NOT INSPECT ALLIED VESSELS.

7. WE UNDERSTAND THAT LOCAL COMMUNIST LEADERS IN MARSEILLES AREA INTEND TO HOLD PRESS CONFERENCE MONDAY MORNING TO CONDEMN MARINE TRAINING AT CANJUERS. THIS MAY, OF COURSE, FURTHER COMPLICATE ENTIRE SUBJECT.

8. RECOMMENDATION: TO THE MAXIMUM EXTENT POSSIBLE, WE

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BELIEVE THAT GOF SHOULD HAVE PRINCIPAL ROLE IN DEALING
WITH PRESS CONCERNING U.S. TRAINING ON FRENCH TERRITORY.
FOR THIS REASON, WE RECOMMEND THAT U.S. OFFICIALS AND
SPOKESMEN DECLINE TO BECOME ENGAGED IN PUBLIC DISCUSSION
OF THIS SUBJECT.
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